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FOR EUR/SCE, EUR/PPD, EUR/RPM AND EUR/ERA
OSD FOR POPOVICH

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [HR](#)

SUBJECT: ZAGREB WEEKLY ACTIVITY REPORT - FEBRUARY 12, 2009

11. (U) MFA REPORTING THAT LUXEMBOURG'S PARLIAMENT APPROVED CROATIA'S NATO ACCESSION PROTOCOL:

The MFA issued a press release on February 12 stating that it received information that the Parliament of Luxembourg approved Croatia's accession protocol. According to the MFA the only NATO member countries whose full parliaments have not yet voted to approve Croatia's NATO accession protocol are Greece, Iceland, the Netherlands, and Portugal.
(PD'Amico)

12. (U) PM SANADER PLAN TO REVAMP PENSION FUNDS SPARKS OUTCRY: PM Sanader unpleasantly surprised the public on Tuesday with the announcement that the 2nd pillar of the pension fund (a long-term saving instrument obligatory for Croatian workers) is proving to be a failure ten years after its implementation. The government is researching returning to a single government pension fund. The statement has fired much negative discussion and speculation that the PM is trying to raid the 2nd pillar fund to mend budget gaps, although Sanader promptly dismissed these accusations. Comment: There are not enough details made public yet to say if the public's fears are justified, but the case is rather a sign of the increasing level of economic anxiety in the country. (DMatijas, DWestfall)

13. (SBU) SOME DEMINING PROJECTS APPROVED BUT RETENDER REQUIRED FOR THREE LARGEST: The tender board for USG demining programs, consisting of representatives from the Embassy, International Trust Fund, and the Croatian Mine Action Center (CROMAC) met on February 12 to open bids for seven demining projects which would clear 389,000 square meters of land. Four small projects, with a value of approximately \$250,000, were approved. The three largest projects, covering 275,000 square meters and estimated to cost between \$700,000 and 800,000, will be offered again in three weeks. Although the bids fell within ITF's budget, the board found the bids excessively high. Compared to similar projects funded by the Croatian state budget or World Bank, bids from the same demining companies ran 30 to 50 percent higher for the USG-funded projects. (CZIMMER)

14. (SBU) DEFENSE THREAT REDUCTION AGENCY TEAM VISITS CROATIA: A team from the Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA) met with Croatian officials from the Ministry of Defense (MOD) throughout the week of February 9. The DTRA team visited a number of sites where the MOD stores munitions, particularly MANPADS. The primary purpose of the visit was to come up with USG recommendations for site security improvements at sites where MANPADS are stored as a follow up to the arrangement signed by the Ambassador and Minister of Defense Vukelic for Croatia to destroy 929 MANPADS in August of 2008.
(PD'Amico)

15. SEMINAR HIGHLIGHTS SUCCESS OF EXBS PROGRAMS: The Croatian Ministry of Economy, Labor and Entrepreneurship hosted a best

practices seminar 2 - 7 February 2009. Croatian officials shared their experiences in developing and implementing an effective export control system with their counterparts in Kosovo. Topics included licensing, legislation, interagency coordination, and enforcement. The meeting highlighted Croatia's emergence as a regional leader in matters of export control and border security and the success of EXBS programs in the country. (CRhoton)

16. (U) ROCK AND ROLL AT THE AMERICAN CORNER:

IRC Zagreb organized a presentation on the history of rock and roll at the American Corner in Zadar, a city located on Croatia's Dalmatian coast. In a dynamic talk entitled "Mixing, Melting, Money - Rock'n'Roll, Hip Hop & America Youth," Fulbright Professor Mark Savin discussed the development of rock music and its importance in American culture. Using video clips and recorded music, Professor Savin's lectures have been extremely well received by young audiences. In fact, English language teachers at the lecture have asked Professor Savin to present his lecture to a larger audience in an auditorium in Zadar. Professor Savin has also given his rock music presentation in Vukovar and at the American Corner in Zagreb. These lectures are a part of Embassy Zagreb's continued outreach to youth in Croatia. In addition to increasing understanding of U.S. society, these lectures also provide English language students the opportunity to interact with a native English speaker. Professor Savin is currently teaching as a Fulbright Fellow in American Studies at the University of Zagreb. (MBahlen, KWetzel)

17. (U)ALBANIAN PRIME MINISTER SURPRISES PRESS CONFERENCE WITH PLANS FOR CROATIA-ALBANIA NUKE PLANT: At a press

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conference with Prime Minister Sanader, Prime Minister Berisha announced that he and Sanader had discussed plans for construction of a shared nuclear power plant to be located in Albania. While new nuclear power generation is still on the table for discussion as part of Croatia's long-term energy investment plans, Berisha's announcement of Albania as a potential partner was greeted with surprise. Embassy Tirana told us they don't believe the announcement was part of any serious discussion at this point, and that Albania was not in a position to make such a significant investment. Croatia's official energy investment action plan is expected any day, and we will watch in case Albania figures in their plans. (DWestfall)

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